

TEFILLIN: AN ANCIENT ACUPUNCTURE POINT PRESCRIPTION FOR MENTAL CLARITY

by Steven Schram

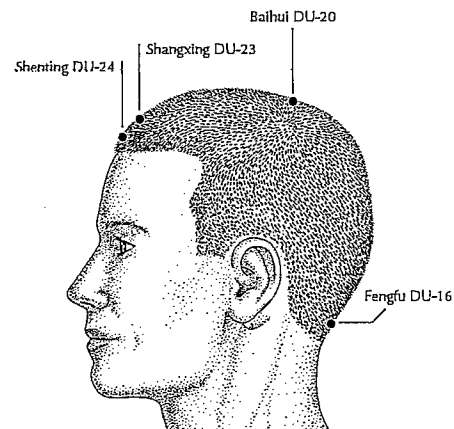
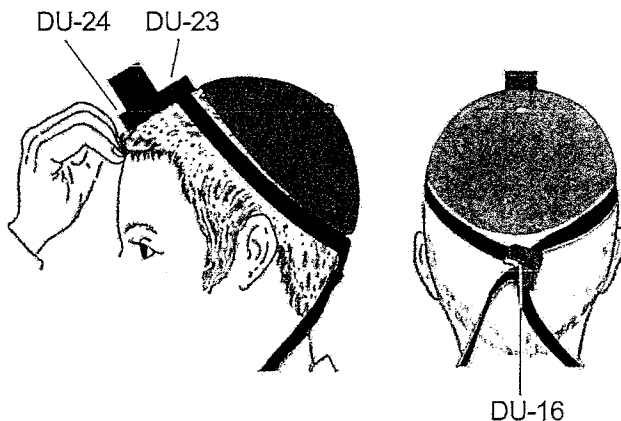
Introduction

Tefillin is an ancient Jewish prayer ritual that uses two small leather boxes, each attached to a long, 9mm wide, leather strap. One box is placed on the biceps of the weaker arm while the second is placed on the head. The biceps strap is tightly wound along the arm in a carefully prescribed manner. The back of the head strap is tied in a knot and carefully placed at the base of the skull.

The acknowledged purpose of the tefillin is to raise spiritual consciousness of the men who wear it. If we examine where the knots and wrappings are placed from a TCM point of view, it appears that the tefillin and wraps form a potent acupuncture point formula focused on the Governing vessel (Du Mai) and aimed at elevating the spirit and clearing the mind.

The head tefillin

The head tefillin is the simplest to examine as its positioning is very explicitly defined. The box is always placed midway between the eyes with the base of the tefillin placed on the forehead so the bottom edge remains just inside the hairline. The diagram below shows this location as Shenting DU-24. The weight of the box (several ounces) is a little



further back at Shangxing DU-23; the exact placement of weight will vary slightly depending on the size of the box. The knot in the back (where the strap is tied together) is placed just under the external occipital protuberance. This corresponds to Fengfu DU-16. Once the knot is in place, the side straps are tightened down. This creates a steady upward pressure into Fengfu DU-16 and more pressure on both Shangxing DU-23 and Shenting DU-24.

Binding the left arm

I explored the four major variations in wrapping procedures: Chassidic¹, Sefardim², Sefard, and Ashkenazi³. By experimenting on myself with these different wrapping procedures, I was able to map out the significant acupuncture points that are stimulated through the procedure (see over page).

Point Selection for Analysis

Along with the three skull points already discussed, the tefillin wrap contacts a good number of the over 50 acupuncture points on the arm⁶. However, we will limit our point analysis to those that have a more substantive influence on the mind and spirit⁷. In addition, because the pressure of the arm wrap is mostly felt at points on the